

A Mockery Of A Result As Wycombe Squander Chances

by Argus

Walthamstow Avenue 4, Wycombe Wanderers 0

THIS is a monstrous mockery of a football result. At no time during the game and by no distortion of the eyes or the imagination were Walthamstow Avenue four goals superior to Wycombe Wanderers. That is the crazy part about it. On the contrary—the reverse would probably have held true for long stretches of the play when the Wycombe will-o'-the-wisp forwards played some highly cultured attacking football.

Why then did the Wanderers lose this crucial Isthmian League battle by such a convincing margin?

Blame this idiotic score on forwards who squandered advantages in skill by being impoverished when it came to the simple art of shooting straight and often and to a defence which became so old-maidish in the second half that every time an Avenue forward crossed the ball into the goalmouth a score seemed likely.

FELL APART

The Wycombe defence fell apart in one 60-second spell when Avenue piled on two second half goals.

Distinctly shaky in the Wycombe goalmouth, Dennis Syrett — had he been at his peak — would have stopped two and probably three of the Walthamstow goals. Even without the magical boots of Jimmy Lewis to guide them goalwards, a very ordinary-looking Avenue side contrived to look dangerous with the most innocent of movements.

It is a tremendous pity that promising 17-year-old Dave Thomas should have had to make his first team debut in such circumstances, but not for a moment did he let the Wanderers down.

On this showing, tall, sensible Dave is going to be a giant among Wycombe wing halves. He gave Len Worley some beautifully-judged passes and tackled strongly and quickly.

There were gaps galore in the centre of the Wycombe defence, where John Fisher, still trying gamely to capture his best form, could not subdue Vic Abramson the tough Avenue reserve number 9.

But the real culprits were so obviously the Wycombe forwards. It was little short of a soccer crime that so many talented and inspired movements should be frittered away. While Wycombe sniffed disdainfully at their opportunities—and they were legion—Walthamstow snapped their own up wolfishly.

For the first 70 minutes, Wycombe had fully two-thirds of the attacking play. They ought to have been leading by two or three goals at half-time and it is an absolute mystery how they ever came to be trailing 2-0.

TROTT MISSED

The absent Cliff Trott—he was a spectator on Saturday—must have winced at the complete lack of front line fire. Trott's gifts of limitless enthusiasm, drive and energy were sadly missed. James, who might have made all the difference, had a shocking game and was hopelessly off target.

Twinkling merrily in mid-field, Ron Fryer was the pick of the Wycombe forwards and he and Bates blazed passes through the Walthamstow defence, from all angles and positions, with ridiculous ease. Free and Worley dribbled and darted past their full backs as if they were non-existent but with all this carnage in front of him young Garry McGuire, the Avenue goalkeeper, had a comparatively peaceful afternoon.

The pattern was soon evident. Wycombe attacked and attacked . . . McGuire tipping James' header over the crossbar . . . and in almost their first serious attack, Avenue scored. Little Reg Groves hit a fast shot into the net off a goalpost, the ball somehow eluding Syrett.

Neither James nor Bates could get in a winning drive, James tamely toe-ending one of Fryer's crosses wide of a gaping goal.

But the Avenue goalkeeper was really in luck when Bates stormed through the home defence and shot hard—the ball striking McGuire violently on the chest.

PARALYSED

James sent another glorious chance pathetically wide as soon as the second half started but the equaliser seemed only seconds away. Then came the goal which clinched the points. The Wanderers defence was stricken and paralysed as Groves whipped across a low centre for Abramson to score from close range.

To find some power from somewhere, Len Worley and Ron Fryer swapped wing positions but the damage had been done. Walthamstow luck prospered. They began to roast the Wanderers rearguard and in a one minute spell, Harvey chested home a third—after Syrett had failed to grab a Groves centre—and Saggers brilliantly nodded in the fourth.